

Tracts for the Times
Mission Series

India's
Needs

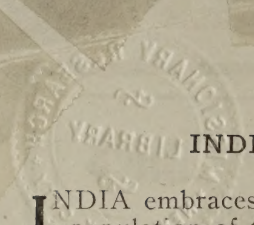
Tracts of this Series

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INDIA'S NEEDS.

INDIA embraces one fifth of the entire population of the globe, and is therefore important as a mission field in the very highest degree.

1. Natural Features.

India combines all extremes of climate. The Himalayas in the north rise 24,000 feet above the sea, and are covered with perpetual snow, while the plains of India are scourged with a tropical sun. The great rivers of India are the Indus, the Ganges and the Brahmaputra. The principal portion of the surface of India is a great plain enclosed by several ranges of mountains along the coast, and across the northern boundary.

2. History.

Before the Christian era the Persians and the Macedonians conquered India. During the Middle Ages India was invaded by the Mohammedans and the Tartars. The Moguls were the sovereigns of India in the sixteenth century,

and built up a splendid empire. But Britain gradually overcame the dominant tribes of India, until, in 1857, at the close of the Indian Mutiny, her power was fully established. She now has absolute rule over twelve provinces with 221,438,370 population. There are one hundred and fifty-three native States, governed by their own princes, but under the oversight of Great Britain. The Resident, representing the English government, lives in each of these States as an adviser.

3. Improvements.

Under British rule India has been rapidly developed. There are 22,000 miles of railroad, 20,000 miles of canals and 50,000 miles of macadamized road, with more than 30,000 miles of telegraph wires. The civil government of India is so perfect that it is said that if a single leaf were stolen from a palm tree it could be detected, as every tree is numbered.

4. Population.

The population of India is mostly found in towns and villages. While there are only twenty-eight great cities of over 100,000 inhabitants, there are 714,000 villages containing 260,000,000

people, or nine tenths of India's whole population. These people live by agriculture chiefly. More than 60 per cent of the population are either landholders, tenants, or agricultural laborers. About 3 per cent are cotton workers, and about three per cent more are artisans of other kinds. More than 6,000,000 are professional mendicants.

5. Social Condition.

The curse of India is caste. It has divided the population into classes which cannot intermingle. The four original castes now number many thousands. This iron band destroys all liberty and hope, and is the greatest obstacle to Christianity. The family life of India is very sad. Girls are married when but children, and become the property of some man who has no love for them, and often they become mothers while they are but children. The physical and social consequences are sad and most injurious, but the saddest of all the issues of this condition is the misery of India's widows. When the husband dies, his child wife becomes a helpless slave, exposed to neglect, oppression and insult,

and there are 25,000,000 of these child widows in India today.

6. Languages.

There are many languages in India. The Hindustani is spoken by the largest number, about 85,000,000; the Bengali by about 40,000,000, the Marathi by about 20,000,000, the Punjabi by about 18,000,000, the Telugu by 20,000,000, the Tamil by 15,000,000, and about six other languages by smaller divisions of the people.

7. Religions.

The ancient religion of the Hindus is preserved in their sacred books called "The Vedas." Modern Hinduism has degenerated from its ancient simplicity, and is most degrading, with millions of gods. They are numbered at 330,000,000. The Mohammedans are very numerous in India, numbering about 60,000,000. The Parsees are the wealthiest section of the population, though not so numerous.

8. Protestant Missions in India.

There are about fifty missionary societies at present engaged in work in India. The first Protestant missions

were begun by the Danes in 1750 in South India. William Carey was the pioneer of English missions in India. He landed in Calcutta in 1793, but was obliged to locate at the Danish settlement of Serampore, owing to the opposition of the East India Company. The first American missionaries went out in 1812. Roman Catholic Missions had already been planted by Francis Xavier in 1541. There are at present nearly a million Protestant Christians in India, with about three thousand foreign missionaries from America and Europe. During the past decade the increase of Protestant converts has been more rapid than the growth of the population.

Some reasons why we should be encouraged to labor for the evangelization of India:

1st. They are members of our own race, the great Aryan race.

2d. They are under the protection of the British government, and every facility is afforded for missionary work.

3d. The whole country is open, with railway facilities, good roads, commercial intercourse, and all the conditions that

make missionary work convenient and easy.

4th. The religious destitution of India is appalling. There are great communities all over India where the proportion of missionaries to the population is less than one missionary to a million people.

5th. The condition of the people is sad, their poverty is very great, the average wages being from 5 to 10 cents a day, and millions perishing constantly of actual starvation. Their moral and religious condition is still more sad.

6th. God's providence has been working in India. Plague and famine have worn out much of their prejudice and the kindness shown in the work of relief has won their confidence in the missionaries and thrown into our hands great numbers of orphans, who are being trained for future work.

7th. The Spirit of God has been working in India. Great harvests of souls have been gathered in in many places and missionary work is bearing richer fruit than any work that the Church of Christ is doing in the home land. The fields are white and the harvest plenteous.

“Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth laborers into his harvest.”

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